

Call for Papers

Ocean Governance in the Indo-Pacific: Law, Security, and Sustainability in a Changing Region

Adelaide, Australia | 16-17 November 2026

In-person conference

About the Conference

The Indo-Pacific is at the centre of global strategic, economic, and environmental transformations. Increasing geopolitical competition, intensifying maritime security concerns, and accelerating climate impacts are reshaping how ocean spaces are governed across the region. At the same time, marine ecosystems face mounting pressures from biodiversity loss, pollution, and expanding human activities, including deep seabed resource exploitation.

Despite its global importance, ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific remains fragmented, with overlapping legal frameworks and institutional arrangements—from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to regional fisheries bodies, ASEAN-led mechanisms, and emerging regional initiatives.

This conference aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue across law, policy, environmental science, and maritime practice. It will bring together ITLOS judges, scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to critically examine current challenges and identify pathways for more effective, cooperative, and sustainable ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific.

About Adelaide University

Adelaide University is a leading research-intensive institution, ranked among the world's top 100 universities, with a strong international reputation in law, environmental governance, and interdisciplinary research addressing global challenges. Situated in the heart of South Australia, the University provides a dynamic intellectual environment that fosters innovation, collaboration, and policy-relevant scholarship. Through its research strengths in international law, ocean governance, environmental sustainability, and Indo-Pacific studies, Adelaide University plays an active role in shaping regional and global debates. The University is committed to engaging with government, industry, and international partners to produce research that has real-world impact and contributes to addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region. This conference is supported by Adelaide University Environment Institute, the Environmental and Natural Resources Law (ENREL) Research Unit and Research Unit on Military Law and Ethics (RUMLAE) at the Adelaide Law School.

Conference Objectives

The conference will:

- Assess strengths and gaps in Indo-Pacific Ocean governance frameworks
- Examine the implications of great-power competition for maritime order and regional stability
- Analyse environmental pressures, including climate change and biodiversity loss
- Explore opportunities for enhanced regional cooperation
- Promote engagement between academia, government, and practitioners
- Showcase innovative interdisciplinary research

We invite paper proposals addressing (but not limited to) the following themes:

1. UNCLOS and the Maritime Order in the Indo-Pacific

- Evolving interpretations of UNCLOS principles
- Maritime disputes and dispute settlement
- Navigation rights, military activities at sea, and airspace governance

2. Climate Change, Environmental Security, and Marine Conservation

- Climate impacts on coastal and archipelagic States
- Marine protected areas and ecosystem-based management
- Deep seabed mining and governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction

3. Maritime Security, Grey-Zone Activities, and Regional Stability

- Maritime law enforcement and coast guard cooperation
- Non-traditional security threats
- Emerging technologies and maritime domain awareness

4. Indigenous and Local Perspectives in Ocean Governance

- Indigenous knowledge systems and ocean stewardship
- Rights of Indigenous peoples in marine and coastal spaces

5. Blue Economy, Infrastructure, and Sustainable Development

- Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and combating IUU fishing
- Maritime transport and port infrastructure
- Financing sustainable ocean initiatives

6. Special Roundtable: Australia's Role in the Indo-Pacific Maritime Order

- Regional leadership and strategic positioning
- Research–policy partnerships
- Engagement with Indo-Pacific partners

Submission Guidelines

- Abstracts: Maximum 500 words
- Include: Title, author name(s), affiliation(s), short bio and contact details.
- Deadline for abstract submissions: 20 July 2026
- Notification of acceptance: 31 July 2026
- Full papers (for accepted presenters): 2 November 2026

Please submit abstracts to bruno.arpi@adelaide.edu.au. Further details regarding registration (including fees), programme information, and venue logistics will be released in due course. For any enquiries, please contact the conference convenor at the same address.

Accepted presentations will be considered for inclusion in an edited book to be published in 2027 with a leading international publisher.